

CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A method for handling information used in customer service, said method comprising:
 - capturing a customer's speech;
 - recognizing a key word in said customer's speech;
 - based on said key word, searching a database; [[and]]
 - retrieving information from said database[[:]] , wherein said retrieving is completed during a conversation involving said customer and a customer service representative; and
 - providing said retrieved information to a customer service representative.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - initiating action, based on said keyword, to solve a problem affecting said customer.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising at least one of:
 - preparing an e-mail message,
 - preparing an order form,
 - preparing an address label, and
 - routing a telephone call.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said database contains one or more data elements selected from the group consisting of
 - customer name elements,
 - customer address elements,
 - telephone call – routing elements,
 - problem management elements,
 - product update elements,

order form elements,
and advisory bulletin elements.

6. (Currently amended) A method for handling information used in customer service, said method comprising:
 - receiving speech input from a customer;
 - performing speech recognition on said speech input to generate a text equivalent;
 - parsing said text to identify a key word;
 - searching for an occurrence of said key word in a database; [[and]]
 - retrieving information from said database[[:]] , wherein said retrieving is completed during a conversation involving said customer and a customer service representative; and
 - providing said retrieved information to a customer service representative.
7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said speech input is derived from a telephone conversation.
8. (Canceled)
9. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
 - initiating action, based on said key word, to solve a problem affecting said customer.
10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said initiating action includes performing one or more tasks selected from the group consisting of
 - preparing an e-mail message,
 - preparing an order form,
 - preparing an address label, and
 - routing a telephone call.

11. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said database contains one or more data elements selected from the group consisting of

- customer name elements,
- customer address elements,
- telephone call – routing elements,
- problem management elements,
- product update elements,
- order form elements,
- and advisory bulletin elements.

12. (Currently amended) A system for handling information used in customer service, said system comprising:

- means for receiving speech input from a customer;
- means for performing speech recognition on said speech input to generate a text equivalent;
- means for parsing said text to identify a key word;
- means for searching for an occurrence of said key word in a database; [[and]]
- means for retrieving information from said database[[]] , wherein said means for retrieving completes its operation during a conversation involving said customer and a customer service representative; and
- means for providing said retrieved information to a customer service representative.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein said speech input is derived from a telephone conversation.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Original) The system of claim 12, further comprising:

- means for initiating action, based on said key word, to solve a problem affecting said customer.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein said means for initiating action includes means for performing one or more tasks selected from the group consisting of

- preparing an e-mail message,
- preparing an order form,
- preparing an address label, and
- routing a telephone call.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein said database contains one or more data elements selected from the group consisting of

- customer name elements,
- customer address elements,
- telephone call – routing elements,
- problem management elements,
- product update elements,
- order form elements,
- and advisory bulletin elements.

18. (Currently amended) A computer-usable medium having computer-executable instructions for handling information used in customer service, said computer-executable instructions comprising:

- means for receiving speech input from a customer;
- means for performing speech recognition on said speech input to generate a text equivalent;
- means for parsing said text to identify a key word;
- means for searching for an occurrence of said key word in a database; [[and]]
- means for retrieving information from said database[[]], wherein said means for retrieving completes its operation during a conversation involving said customer and a customer service representative; and
- means for providing said retrieved information to a customer service representative.

19. (Original) The computer-usable medium of claim 18, wherein said speech input is derived from a telephone conversation.
20. (Canceled)
21. (Original) The computer-usable medium of claim 18, further comprising:
means for initiating action, based on said key word, to solve a problem affecting said customer.
22. (Original) The computer-usable medium of claim 21, wherein said means for initiating action includes means for performing one or more tasks selected from the group consisting of
preparing an e-mail message,
preparing an order form,
preparing an address label, and
routing a telephone call.
23. (Original) The computer-usable medium of claim 18, wherein said database contains one or more data elements selected from the group consisting of
customer name elements,
customer address elements,
telephone call – routing elements,
problem management elements,
product update elements,
order form elements,
and advisory bulletin elements.
24. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein providing said retrieved information to a customer service representative includes:
identifying a plurality of actions that may be performed to address an issue raised by the customer during the conversation;

ranking actions within the plurality of actions based on a criteria to thereby generate a ranked list of actions for addressing the issue; and
outputting the ranked list of actions to the customer service representative.

25. (New) The method of claim 3, further comprising:
requesting approval of the action from the customer service representative; and
stopping the action if the customer service representative does not provide approval of the action.

26. (New) The method of claim 24, further comprising:
initiating an action in the ranked list of actions;
requesting approval of the action from the customer service representative;
stopping the action if the customer service representative does not provide approval of the action;
removing the action from the ranked list of actions in response to stopping the action; and
revising the ranked list of actions in response to removing the action from the ranked list of actions.

27. (New) The method of claim 24, further comprising:
performing a plurality of actions in the ranked list of actions in an order determined based on the ranking of actions in the ranked list of actions.